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Student Bulletin

Taking a Gap-Year

Upon graduating from high school this year, many students will be heading off to college in the fall to begin their undergraduate education. While attending college right after high school is the usual route for most students, taking a year off from studies to travel, volunteer, study abroad or take time to determine the career you want is another option. This is known as a gap year. We'll explain the concept of planning a gap year and show you some of the available opportunities if you decide to postpone your college education.

Search Your Soul, Search the Internet!

You will find a lot of resources on the Internet devoted to helping you plan your gap-year. Some of these include gap-planning sites, student articles and essays written by professionals with extensive knowledge on the gap-year experience. You will also find it very beneficial to seek assistance from your school counselor, your local library and your parents. Also, try to speak with a former gap-year participant. Contact one of the many gap-year planning sites such as, The Center for Interim Programs at www.interimprograms.com, and ask if they can match you with former gap-year participants who can share with you their personal gap-year experiences, likes, and dislikes and help you gain a better understanding of the entire planning process. After thorough research, you should be able to make the best decisions for you.

Focus on Your Finances

A gap-year of study can be expensive if you do not plan well and seek funding far in advance. Talk with your parents about your decision. If you plan on traveling during your gap-year, get travel insurance. Also, make sure to have enough money saved for medical emergencies or accidents. Try to work during the year as an intern or with a program or an organization that will pay enough to cover most or all of your expenses. They may be more than willing to assist you financially, especially if you can give valid reasons as to why you believe a gap-year is important (e.g., career exploration, maturity, etc.) and explain how the time away from the academic world will benefit you. Apply for financial aid as if you will attend and reapply each year.

Get Accepted into a College

Many colleges allow you to defer enrollment for a year before beginning classes. Be sure the school you are interested in attending is open to gap-years and make sure to understand the associated requirements. Therefore, it may benefit you and is easier to gain admission into a college before beginning your gap-year. It is not advisable to tell the college that you plan on deferring for a year before you apply, or they might not admit you. Submit your college applications prior to the completion of your senior year, and make sure you elect to defer enrollment for one year. This way, once your gap-year is complete, you can begin your education without the worry of having to get admitted to a school.

Gap Year Programs and Resources

The following is a list of some of the organizations with programs available to students who are planning an interim gap-year. You will find there are numerous opportunities available for you to study abroad, volunteer, complete an internship and much more.

AmeriCorps offers local and national community service opportunities to individuals who want to make a difference ir the lives of others and in the world. AmeriCorps also offers i members a variety of benefits, such as a living allowance, education award, health coverage, loan forbearance and more. To learn more about the AmeriCorps program, benefit and eligibility requirements, visit http://www.americorps.org.

The Council on International Educational Exchange (CIEE) offers programs for college-bound graduates who want to volunteer, teach or live abroad learning and exploring differe cultures during their gap year. To learn more about the benefits of the Council on International Educational Exchang programs and how to apply, visit http://www.ciee.org.

City Year offers its members a variety of benefits which rang from educational and living stipends, health insurance and more in exchange for a year-long commitment to transform schools in the United States and Africa. Eligibility: Must be a least 17 to 24 years of age, a high school graduate and willi to dedicate at least 10 months to full-time service. To learn about additional eligibility requirements and benefits, please visit http://www.cityyear.org.

Gap-Year.com offers a wealth of information on taking time away from school to travel abroad, work, volunteer and more Visit http://www.gap-year.com to learn more.

Studyabroad.com offers information on opportunities to stud in another country as well as volunteer and internship programs. Visit http://www.studyabroad.com.

STATravel offers gap-year travel and planning information. They also offer travel insurance packages. To learn more vis http://www.statravel.com.